

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1301

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: CYPRUS ANTIQUITIES: ALLEGED THEFT OF GREEK ARTIFACTS

REF: STATE 046178

1. FYI: IN OUR ONLY PARTIALLY INFORMED VIEW, BOTH SIDES IN THIS CONFLICT HAVE BEEN QUILTY OF DESTROYING/STEALING VALUABLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROPERTIES. BALANCE OF FAULT IN THIS IS CERTAINLY ON THE TURKISH SIDE. BUT MANY HYSTERICAL GREEK ACCUSATIONS HAVE BEEN DISPROVED ON CLOSER INQUIRY, E. G. THE BOMBING OF SALAMIS. AS ANOTHER CASE IN POINT, HARVARD'S DR EMILY VERMEULE ORIGINALLY THOUGHT THAT PROVEN THEFTS FROM UNIVERSITY'S MORPHOU COLLECTION HAD BEEN RESPONSIBILITY OF TURKISH OCCUPYING FORCES. IN THE OPINION OF EXPEDITION'S OWN LOCAL CUSTODIAN, AN OBJECTIVE MARONITE, THEFT OF MOST VALUABLE PIECES EQUALLY LIKELY TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT TIME OF JULY 15 COUP BY GREEKS.

2. IN OTHER CASES (AYIOS KHRYSTOMOS MONASTERY), GREEKS PRECIPITATED TURKISH DESTRUCTION BY USING ANCIENT SITES AS NATIONAL GUARD CENTERS, FOR CONCEALMENT OF WEAPONS, ETC.

3. ON DIRECT KNOWLEDGE, EMBASSY CAN TESTIFY THAT TURKS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEFTS FROM UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA/ NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KYRENIA SHIPWRECK MUSEUM, COMPLETE REMOVAL OF VALUABLE PRIVATE COLLECTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOCATED IN NORTH, AND VERY RECENT ILLEGAL TOMB-DIGGING

IN MYCENAEAN SITE OF ENGOMI. END FYI.

4. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, A SOUND POSITION FOR DEPARTMENT TO
TAKE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES WOULD BE THAT (A) DURING AND
SINCE EVENTS OF LAST SUMMER, US HAS BEEN CONCERNED OVER
POSSIBLE DAMAGES TO CYPRUS' UNIQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE;
(B) WE ARE AWARE THAT THE PARTIES TO CONFLICT HAVE
EXCHANGED ACCUSATIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPREDATION
OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROPERTY; (C) AS AN OUTGROWTH OF OUR
CONCERN, WE HAVE WELCOMED THE ASSIGNMENT TO CYPRUS, AS
A MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (AMBASSADOR WECKMANN), OF A UNESCO
EXPERT (DR DALIBARD) TO WORK WITH THE PARTIES TO PRESERVE
THE ISLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL INHERITANCE FROM FURTHER
DAMAGE.
CRAWFORD

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